

FORM B - BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108

AREA	FORM NO.
0	494



City Lexington

Address 20 Percy Road

Historic Name Arthur Newell House

Present Use residential

Original Use residential

DESCRIPTION:

Year 1896

Source plans

Style Shingle Style

Architect Chapman and Frazer

A.C. Washburn, builder

Exterior wall fabric shingles

Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) _____

Moved _____ Date _____

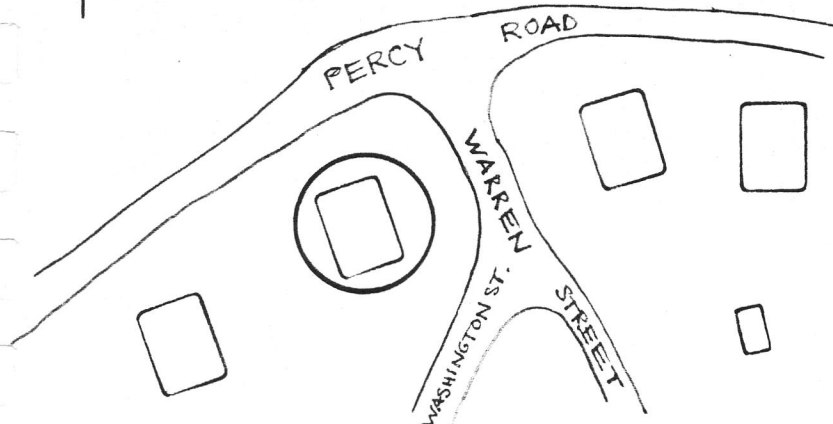
Approx. acreage 15641 ft.²

Setting Munroe Hill; residential street

developed primarily in the late nineteenth
century.

SKETCH MAP

Show property's location in relation to nearest cross streets and/or geographical features. Indicate all buildings between inventoried property and nearest intersection. Indicate north.



Recorded by Anne Grady

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date March, 1984

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (Describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within the community.)

This is a Shingle Style house with a pronounced asymmetrical gable. There are porches on the north and east sides finished with simple brackets. Three dormers have pediments finished with half-timber detail.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community.)

The house was built ^{by Abram C. Washburn for} Arthur W. Newell, president of the Fourth National Bank in Boston. Mr. Newell and his daughter, Alice, were passengers on the Titanic. Newell died, but Alice survived. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Newell moved to a smaller house at 2 Audubon Road designed for her by Willard Brown. She died as Lexington's oldest resident at 103 in 1962.

(See continuation sheet)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES (name of publication, author, date and publisher)

Plans in the possession of the owner.

Description of the Newell House in the Lexington Minute Man, July 31, 1896.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town
LEXINGTON

Property Address
20 PERCY ROAD

Area(s) Form No.

O

494

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

This house occupies what was originally Lot 14 on the 1892 plan of the Lexington Land Company. The lot was sold by Francis E. Tufts to A. W. Newell in December 1895. Newell had the present house built in 1896. On July 3, 1896 the newspaper remarked "Mr. A.W. Newell has built an exceptionally handsome house on Mt. Vernon street, in a peculiarly attractive location. The house is long and rambling in effect, but decidedly picturesque with broad verandas, from which is to be obtained a fair prospect of hill and dale". A more detailed description of the house appeared in the *Lexington Minute-Man* on July 31, 1896. It reads:

Mr. A.C. Washburn conducted us over the house he is completing for Mr. A.W. Newell at the junction of Mt. Vernon and Washington streets. The location is unsurpassed and no matter which direction one looks a panoramic view of valley, field, and hill is displayed. Wide and spacious verandas add materially to the apparent size of the house, and will furnish a delightful retreat in summer days. The interior of the house is attractive and has nicely finished floors and wood-work trimmings. A music room and library are on either side of the reception hall, the latter finished in quartered oak, and the living room and kitchen quarters are in the rear. Five nice chambers and a roomy bath room occupy the second floor, and there are two large bedrooms under the gables. The butler's pantry and store room are finely equipped with glass cabinets and a large refrigerator built in, hot air closets, etc. On the second floor is a clothes chute and a linen closet with ample lockers. The toilet and sanitary arrangements are complete in every detail. To us, one of the most pleasing features of the dwelling was the simple but effective arrangement of the mantel space over the open fireplaces in the several rooms, giving this side of the rooms a panelled effect, after the style of old-time colonial houses. In the dining room the space either side of the paneled mantel is occupied by a glass and china cabinet, occupying the niches in the wall and adding much to the quaint effect of the room. In the library this additional space is utilized by cabinets for books. A roomy barn adjoins the house, with a commodious carriage house finished in matched southern pine, with three well equipped stalls and nicely fitted up harness room. The whole place will make a comfortable and attractive home, and has been thoroughly constructed by the contractor.

Arthur Webster Newell was the president of the Fourth National Bank in Boston. He died at the age of 58 in the sinking of the Titanic on April 15, 1912. He was returning from a trip to the Middle East with two of his three daughters, Madeleine (age 31) and Marjorie Anne (age 23). Marjorie and Madeleine both survived the disaster. (Marjorie Newell Robb died in her sleep on June 11, 1992 at the age of 103, making her one of the longest lived of all of Titanic's survivors). Later in life she became an outspoken critic of raising the sunken ship.

Contrary to information contained in the March 1984 inventory form, after the death of her husband Mrs. Newell (the former Mary E. Greeley) continued to live in the house with daughters Madeleine and Alice. The property was sold by Madeleine and Alice Newell to Robert and Barbara Hills in 1964.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Kollen, Richard. *Lexington: From Liberty's Birthplace to Progressive Suburb*. Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2004.

Lexington Directories, various dates.

Lexington Minute-Man, Dec. 6, 1895, July 3, 1896, July 31, 1896; April 20, 1912.

Middlesex County Register of Deeds, Cambridge, Mass.

Wikipedia.org – information on Titanic.

Supplement prepared by:
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